

Application Serial No. 10/711,467
Reply to Office Action dated June 19, 2006

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-6. (canceled)

7. (new) A method of extracting a mini core from a cutting sample obtained through an earth drilling process comprising:

inserting a first open end of a narrow cylinder to a desired depth in a cutting sample contained within a sample container;

subsequently inserting a piston into a second, opposing open end of the narrow cylinder to a position adjacent a surface of the cutting sample;

with drawing the piston within the narrow cylinder while simultaneously creating a vacuum in the narrow cylinder; and

removing the narrow cylinder from the sample container, thereby extracting the mini core from the cutting sample.

8. (new) The method of claim 7, further comprising: rotating the narrow cylinder as the narrow cylinder is inserted into the cutting sample.

9. (new) The method of claim 7, further comprising: ejecting the mini core from the narrow cylinder.

10. (new) The method of claim 9, wherein the mini core is ejected by squeezing the narrow cylinder.

11. (new) The method of claim 9, further comprising: analyzing the mini core following ejection of the mini core from the narrow cylinder.

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12. (new) The method of claim 7, further comprising: wetting the cutting sample prior to inserting the narrow cylinder.

13. (new) The method of claim 7, wherein the narrow cylinder is hand pressed into the cutting sample.